



Shrewsbury Public Schools

Joseph M. Sawyer, Ed.D.

Superintendent's Update October 7, 2011

Dear Shrewsbury Families,

Since school opened over a month ago, I have had the opportunity to make several visits to classrooms in all nine of our schools, and I am continually impressed by the quality of instruction and the engagement of our students with important learning tasks. So, it is no surprise to me that our students continue to excel on the state MCAS exams. Please continue reading to see some highlights of our 2011 MCAS performance, to learn about how you can provide input as our school district sets strategic priorities for the next five years, and for some exciting news about a significant grant award we will receive.

2011 MCAS Results

Shrewsbury students performed extremely well on last spring's MCAS exams, both compared to other Massachusetts districts and compared to our past results. Our new assistant superintendent, Mary Beth Banios, will present a detailed report at next Wednesday evening's School Committee meeting, and I'd like to share just a few highlights here:

- All elementary grades placed in the top 10% in the state (Grade 3 Reading top 7%; Grade 3 Math top 5%; Grade 4 English Language Arts top 3%; Grade 4 Math top 3%)
- At the middle level, Grade 5 English Language Arts was in the top 11%; Grade 6 Mathematics was in the top 10%; and Grade 7 Mathematics was in the top 8% in the state.
- At the high school level, both Grade 10 English Language Arts and Math were in the top 11% in the state.
- The overall average of state rankings across all grades and tests was top 13%.
- Students scoring "Advanced" in English Language Arts *increased* by 10% in Grade 6, 13% in Grade 8, and 12% in Grade 10, and are at the highest percentage ever in five out of seven grade levels tested.

- Calvin Coolidge School, Floral Street School, and Spring Street School were all named Governor's Commendation Schools for exceptionally high growth in student performance.

Strategic Planning

The School Committee has asked the administrative team to lead an effort to set strategic priorities for our school district for the next five years. It is crucial to have stakeholders' voices included in this process, and I am hoping that parents, high school students, and community members can assist us by completing an **online survey**. The survey asks for your opinion regarding what you believe are the most important things on which our schools should focus their time and resources. There will also be a **public forum where you can provide feedback in person on Wednesday, October 19 at 7:00pm at Oak Middle School**.

Take the online survey by clicking on this

link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LSWQKS5>

Physical Education Grant

I am excited to announce that Shrewsbury succeeded in being awarded an almost **\$1.4 million grant for improving our physical education program**. The Carol M. White Physical Education Program grant from the United States Department of Education will provide \$1,374,449 over three years and will fund a program named *The Get Fit Adventure*. This program will provide equipment, resources, and staff training to ultimately help students improve their exercise habits and their nutrition through enhanced physical education programming at school as well as family activities in conjunction with the Parks and Recreation Department and Shrewsbury Youth and Family Services. Thank you to Patricia Degon, our Director of Health, Physical Education, and Family Consumer Science, for the significant extra effort that went into applying for this competitive grant, which promises to have a very positive impact on our community.

Please accept my best wishes for a terrific holiday weekend.

Respectfully,

Joe Sawyer
Superintendent of Schools